

COVID vaccines would be required for military under new plan

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Members of the U.S. military will be required to get the COVID-19 vaccine beginning next month under a plan laid out by the Pentagon Monday and endorsed by President Joe Biden. In memos distributed to all troops, top Pentagon leaders said the vaccine is a necessary step to maintain military readiness.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the mid-September deadline could be accelerated if the vaccine receives final FDA approval or infection rates continue to rise.

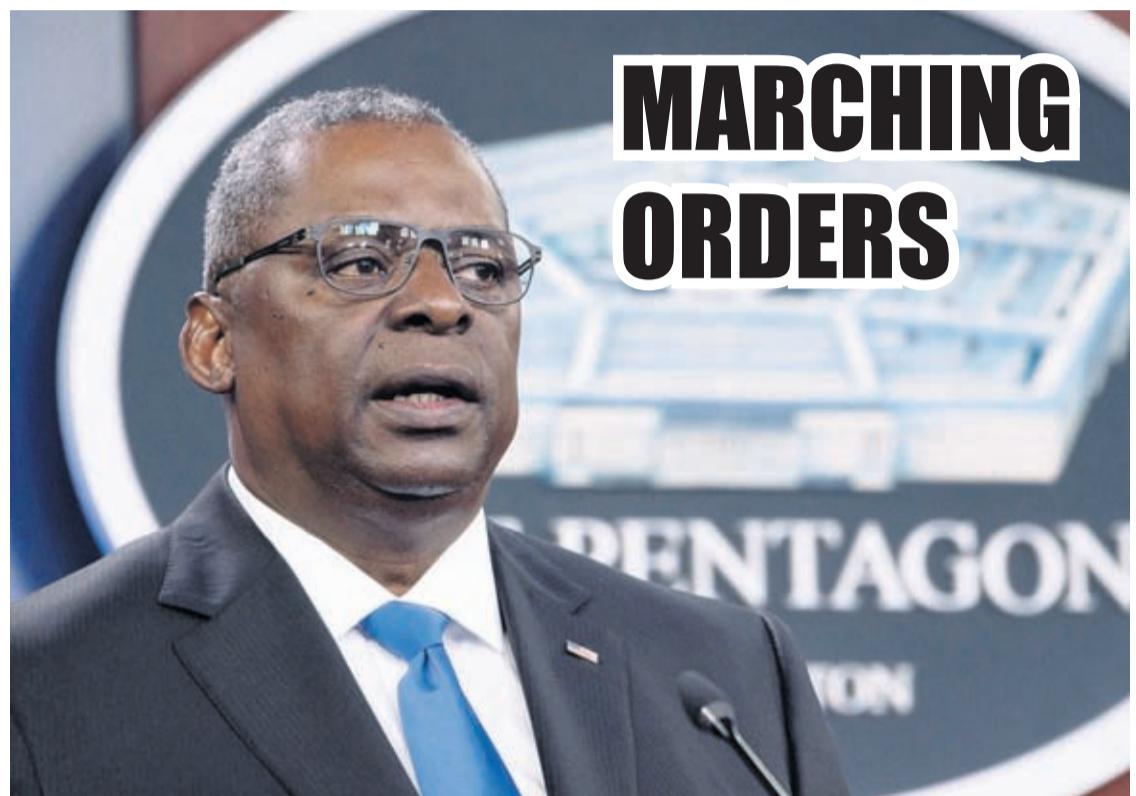
"I will seek the president's approval to make the vaccines mandatory no later than mid-September, or immediately upon" licensure by the Food and Drug

Administration "whichever comes first," Austin said in his memo, warning them to prepare for the requirement.

Austin's plan provides time for the FDA to give final approval to the Pfizer vaccine, which is expected early next month. Without that formal approval, Austin needs a waiver from Biden to make the shots mandatory, and Biden has already made clear he supports the move.

His decision reflects similar moves by governments and companies around the world, as nations struggle with the highly contagious delta variant that has sent new U.S. cases, hospitalizations and deaths surging to heights not seen since the peaks last winter.

Continued on next page



In this July 21, 2021 file photo, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin speaks at a press briefing at the Pentagon in Washington.

Associated Press

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This March 27, 2008, file photo, shows the Pentagon in Washington.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The concerns are especially acute in the military, where service members often live and work closely together in barracks and on ships, increasing the risks of rapid spreading. Any large outbreak of the virus in the military could affect America's ability to defend itself in any national security crisis.

Austin warned that if infection rates rise and potentially affect military readiness, "I will not hesitate to act sooner or recommend a different course to the President if I feel the need to do so. To defend this Nation, we need a healthy and ready force."

In a statement Monday, Biden said he strongly supports Austin's message to the force on the departments plan "to add the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of required vaccinations for our service members not later than mid-September."

Biden said the country is still on a wartime footing and "being vaccinated will enable our service members to stay healthy, to better protect their families, and to ensure that our force is ready to operate anywhere in the world."

Austin's memo, which went out Monday, was followed quickly by one from Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"The Secretary of Defense intends to mandate vaccinations for all Service members in the coming weeks," said Milley, adding that

the military's medical professionals recommended the move. At the bottom of his message, Milley scrawled a handwritten note: "Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is a key force protection and readiness issue."

The decision comes a bit more than a week after Biden told defense officials to develop a plan requiring troops to get shots as part of a broader campaign to increase vaccinations in the federal workforce.

Austin said the military services will have the next few weeks to prepare, determine how many vaccines they need, and how this mandate will be implemented. The additional time, however, also is a nod to the bitter political divisiveness over the vaccine and the knowledge that making it mandatory will likely trigger opposition from vaccine opponents across the state and federal governments, Congress and the American population.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Monday that he believes the military has enough vaccines to meet the requirements. He added, "You can consider this memo not just a warning order to the services but to the troops themselves."

Democratic and Republican leaders of the House Armed Services Committee said vaccines have proven to be effective.

"Some may try and criticize the Secretary's decision, using anti-vax

arguments that are not supported by facts or science to politicize the conversation. These desperate attention seekers must be ignored," said Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., said the vaccine will help protect troops who live in cramped conditions and don't have the option to telework. Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta also praised the plan, saying it will "ensure that the Joint Force remains healthy and ready to fight and win our nation's wars — and that our military families will remain safe."

The decision will add the COVID-19 vaccine to a list of other inoculations that service members are already required to get. Depending on their location around the world, service members can get as many as 17 different vaccines.

Austin's memo also said that in the meantime, the Pentagon will comply with Biden's order for additional restrictions on any federal personnel who have not been vaccinated. Those restrictions will include wearing masks, social distancing and travel limits.

According to the Pentagon, more than 1 million troops are fully vaccinated and another 237,000 have received one shot. But the military services vary widely in their vaccination rates.

The Navy said that more than 74% of all active duty and reserve sailors have been vaccinated with at least one shot. The Air Force, meanwhile, said that more than 65% of its active duty and 60% reserve forces are at least partially vaccinated, and the number for the Army — by far the largest service — appears to be closer to 50%.

Military officials have said the pace of vaccines has been growing across the force, with some units — such as sailors deploying on a warship — seeing nearly 100% of their members get shots. But the totals drop off dramatically, including among the National Guard and Reserve, who are much more difficult to track.

Some unvaccinated service members have suggested they'd get the shot once it's required, but others are flatly opposed. Military officials have said that once the vac-

cine is mandated, a refusal could constitute failure to obey an order and may be punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Army guidance, for example, includes counseling soldiers to ensure they understand the purpose of the vaccine and the threat the disease poses. The Army also notes that if a soldier "fails to comply with a lawful order to receive a mandatory vaccine, and does not have an approved exemption, a commander may take appropriate disciplinary action."

Military service officials have said they don't collect data on the number of troops who have refused other mandated vaccines, such as anthrax, hepatitis, chicken pox or flu shots over the past decade or more. And they weren't able to provide details on the punishments any service members received as a result of the refusal.

Officials said they believe the number of troops refusing other mandated vaccines is small. And the discipline could vary.

Also, service members can seek an exemption from any vaccine — either temporary or permanent — for a variety of reasons including health issues or religious beliefs. Regulations involving the other mandatory vaccines say, for example, that anyone who had a severe adverse reaction to the vaccine can be exempt, and those who are pregnant or have other conditions can postpone a shot.

According to defense officials, senior military leaders support making the shot mandatory. In some cases, commanders have struggled to separate vaccinated recruits from unvaccinated recruits during early portions of basic training in order to prevent infections. So, for some, a mandate could make training and housing less complicated.

Navy officials said last week that there has been only one case of COVID-19 hospitalization among sailors and Marines who are fully vaccinated. In comparison, the Navy said there have been more than 123 hospitalizations "in a similarly sized group of unvaccinated sailors and Marines." It said fewer than 3% of its immunized troops have tested positive for COVID-19. The other military services did not provide similar data. □

Time's Up leader resigns after criticism about Cuomo ties

By MARINA VILLENEUVE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP)—The leader of Time's Up, the #MeToo-era organization founded by Hollywood women to fight sexual harassment, resigned under fire Monday for advising Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration behind the scenes in its effort to discredit one of Cuomo's accusers.

Time's Up said in a tweet that it agreed with Roberta Kaplan that stepping down as chair of the group's board of directors was "the right and appropriate thing to do."

A report issued last week by New York's attorney general concluded that Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women. The allegations have thrown the Democrat's career into extreme peril, threatening him with the possibility of both impeachment and criminal charges. Kaplan, a women's rights advocate who has a law practice of her own, counseled the administration last winter when Cuomo was hit with the first of the harassment allegations, leveled by a former economic development ad-



Roberta Kaplan poses for a photo in Atherton Calif., Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2019.

Associated Press

viser, Lindsey Boylan. Both Kaplan and Alphonso David, leader of the Human Rights Campaign, were consulted over a letter the Cuomo administration had drafted attacking Boylan's credibility. Kaplan and David agreed to review the letter.

According to the attorney general's report, Kaplan

told the administration that with some adjustments, the letter would be fine to send out. David, a former counsel to Cuomo, declined to sign the letter but agreed to contact other people to see if they would. Other advisers, though, said it was a bad idea, and the letter was never widely disseminated.

Kaplan's role in advising the Cuomo administration stunned sexual assault victims and others. Several past backers of Time's Up sent an open letter Monday demanding an investigation, charging that the organization's leaders "align themselves with abusers at the expense of survivors."

"TIME'S UP should be

ashamed," the letter said. Activist Alison Turkos, who organized the letter, said sexual assault victims feel they have been abandoned by purported advocates who were secretly working for the other side.

"How are you telling survivors, 'We're a safe space for you, come to us,' but behind closed doors you are handing abusers a playbook of how to cover up and retaliate against your victims?" asked Turkos, whose letter was signed by dozens of self-described victims, including Cuomo accuser Charlotte Bennett. In her resignation letter, Kaplan said she had "reluctantly come to the conclusion that an active law practice is no longer compatible" with serving on the Time's Up board.

She added: "Unfortunately, recent events have made it clear that even our apparent allies in the fight to advance women can turn out to be abusers" — a reference to Cuomo's public support of the #MeToo movement, which included his signing of sweeping new protections in 2019 against sexual harassment. □

Biden imposes sanctions against Belarus' Lukashenko regime

By AAMER MADHANI

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)

— President Joe Biden on Monday said the United States is levying new sanctions against Belarus, marking the one-year anniversary of Alexander Lukashenko's election as president in an election that the U.S. and international community have said was fraught with irregularities.

In announcing the sanctions, the White House also noted the forced landing of a European airliner traveling through Belarus' airspace in order to arrest a prominent opposition journalist aboard.

Among those the Treasury Department cites in the new sanctions are Belaruskali OAO, which is one of Belarus's largest state-owned enterprises and a source of wealth for the regime; the Belarusian Na-

tional Olympic Committee; and 15 private companies, including the prominent Belarusian bank Absolutbank, that have ties to the Lukashenko regime.

The Belarus Olympic committee has been accused of facilitating money laundering, sanctions evasion and the circumvention of visa bans. The International Olympic Committee has also reprimanded it for its failure to protect Belarusian athletes from political discrimination and repression. "It is the responsibility of all those who care about human rights, free and fair elections and freedom of expression to stand against this oppression," Biden said in a statement. "The United States will continue to stand up for human rights and free expression, while holding the Lukashenko regime accountable, in

concert with our allies and partners."

The White House sanctions came as Britain announced new measures meant to target trade with Belarusian state-owned companies, government finance and aviation.

The British sanctions also restrict trade in potash, oil products, intercession and monitoring technology and goods used in cigarette manufacturing. British investors are barred from buying securities issued by the Belarusian state or providing insurance and reinsurance to Belarusian state bodies.

Asked about the sanctions during his annual press conference on Monday, Lukashenko replied, "you in Britain can choke on these sanctions."

Lukashenko was awarded a sixth term leading the



President Joe Biden leaves St. Joseph on the Brandywine Catholic Church in Wilmington, Del., after attending a Mass, Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

Eastern European nation last year in a vote that the opposition and many in the West view as fraudulent. Widespread belief that the vote was stolen triggered mass protests in Belarus that led to increased repressions by Lukashenko's regime on protesters, dissidents and independent media. More than 35,000 people were arrested and thousands were beaten and jailed. Lukashenko has earned the nickname of "Europe's last dictator" in the West for his relentless repression of dissent since taking the helm in Belarus in 1994. □

Canada reopens its border for vaccinated U.S. visitors

By LISA BAUMANN and WILSON RING

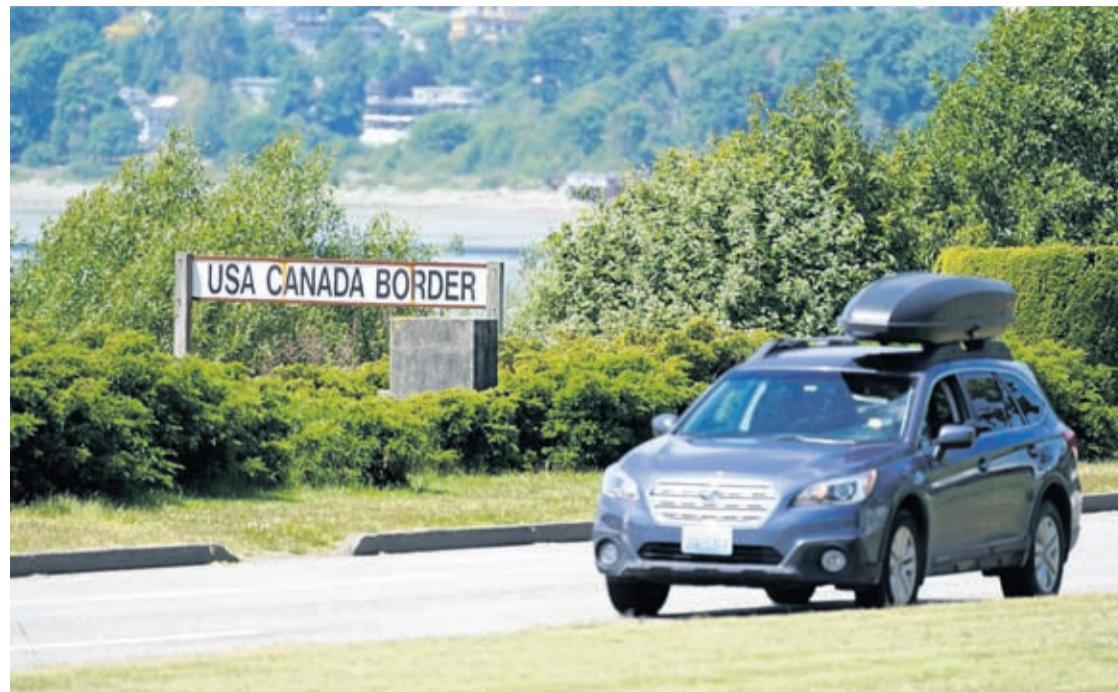
DERBY LINE, Vermont (AP)

— Canada lifted its prohibition on Americans crossing the border to shop, vacation or visit on Monday while the United States is maintaining similar restrictions for Canadians, part of a bumpy return to normalcy from COVID-19 travel bans.

U.S. citizens and legal residents must be both fully vaccinated and test negative for COVID-19 within three days to get across one of the world's longest and busiest land borders, and Canadian officials warn they won't sacrifice safety for shorter border waits. Travelers also must fill out a detailed application on the arriveCAN app before crossing.

On the first morning that U.S. citizens were allowed to cross into Canada again, it was slow going in the tiny border town of Derby Line, Vermont, where long stretches passed without any cars headed into downtown Stanstead, Quebec.

In Buffalo, New York, Lisa and Jim Docherty got COVID-19 tests at a pharmacy for their first visit to their Ridgeway, Ontario, cot-



In this June 8, 2021, file photo, a car heads into the U.S. from Canada at the Peace Arch border crossing in Blaine, Wash.

Associated Press

tage since the summer of 2019. The Hilton, South Carolina couple, originally from Buffalo, has had the cottage more than 40 years. Lisa Doherty said she looked forward to "just mentally making sure everything's OK."

"It's just been a part of my life because my grandma had a cottage since I was 10, so just kind of a feeling like returning to normal," she said.

The pharmacy clinic was charging \$140 for same-

day tests and \$125 for delivery of results in 24 to 48 hours.

"At this point, we'll just do whatever we have to do," Lisa Docherty said before heading in for a nasal swab.

By early afternoon, passenger cars were waiting more than an hour at the Rainbow Bridge to enter Niagara Falls, Ontario, from Niagara Falls, New York. There were no delays at two other western New York crossings, the Peace

Bridge in Buffalo and the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge in Lewiston.

The U.S.-Canada border has been closed to non-essential travel since March 2020 to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The U.S. has said it will extend its closure to all Canadians making non-essential trips until at least Aug. 21, which also applies to the Mexican border. But the Biden administration is beginning to make plans for a phased reopening. The

main requirement would be that nearly all foreign visitors to the U.S. will have to be vaccinated against the coronavirus.

But Canadians aren't waiting for reciprocal rules.

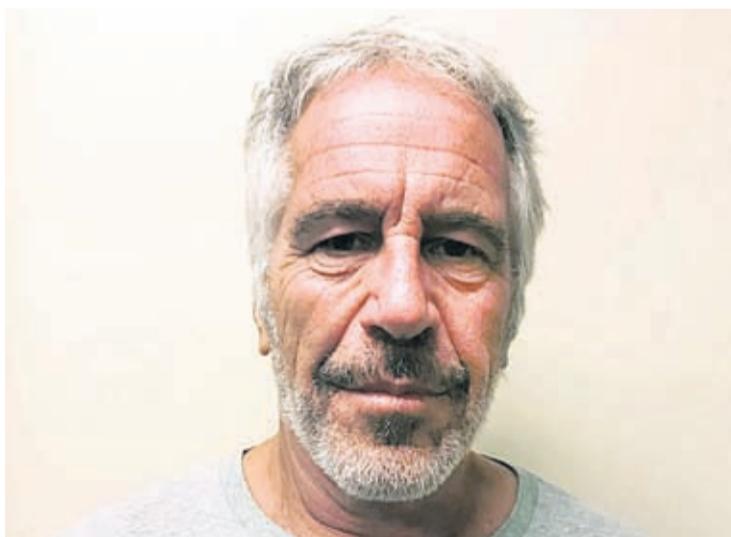
Garnet Health, an Essex, Vermont-based company that offers same-day COVID-19 testing, has seen the number of tests it performs more than triple in recent weeks. The increase coincides with Canada's decision last month to drop a two-week quarantine requirement for its citizens when they return home from the U.S.

"I imagine once that border opens, we are going to see lots of people," said Chelsea Sweeney, the company's director of business development.

Joel Villanueva, owner of Primo's Mexican Grill in White Rock, British Columbia, about 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) north of the U.S. border, is more than ready for Americans to return.

"Let's get this thing going," he said. "A lot of our customers are from the United States, and we are literally minutes from across the border. We welcome our Americans, and we depend on their foot traffic." □

Epstein accuser sues Prince Andrew, citing sex assault at 17



This March 28, 2017, file photo, provided by the New York State Sex Offender Registry, shows Jeffrey Epstein.

Associated Press

By LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One of

Jeffrey Epstein's longtime accusers sued Prince An-

drew on Monday, saying he sexually assaulted her when she was 17.

Lawyers for Virginia Giuffre filed the lawsuit in Manhat-

tan federal court.

In a statement, Giuffre said the lawsuit was brought under the Child Victims Act to allege she was trafficked to him and sexually abused by him.

"I am holding Prince Andrew accountable for what he did to me," she said. "The powerful and rich are not exempt from being held responsible for their actions. I hope that other victims will see that it is possible not to live in silence and fear, but to reclaim one's life by speaking out and demanding justice."

"I did not come to this decision lightly," she added. "As a mother and a wife, my family comes first — and I know that this action will subject me to further at-

tacks by Prince Andrew and his surrogates — but I knew if I did not pursue this action, I would be letting them and victims everywhere down."

In late 2019, Prince Andrew told BBC Newsnight that he never had sex with Giuffre, saying, "It didn't happen." He said he has "no recollection" of ever meeting her and told an interviewer there are "a number of things that are wrong" about Giuffre's account, which alleges the encounter occurred in 2001.

"I can absolutely categorically tell you it never happened," Andrew said.

According to the lawsuit, the prince abused Giuffre on multiple occasions when she was under the

age of 18.

It said that on one occasion, the prince sexually abused her in London at the home of Ghislaine Maxwell when Epstein, Maxwell and Prince Andrew forced her to have sexual intercourse with the prince against her will.

On another occasion, Prince Andrew sexually abused Plaintiff in Epstein's New York mansion, the lawsuit said.

Maxwell, 59, has pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking charges in Manhattan federal court, where she faces trial in November.

Epstein, 66, took his own life in a federal jail in Manhattan in August 2019, a month after he was arrested on sex trafficking charges. □

Contractors who powered U.S. war in Afghanistan stuck in Dubai

By ISABEL DEBRE

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Some of the foreign contractors who powered the logistics of America's "forever war" in Afghanistan now find themselves stranded on an unending layover in Dubai without a way to get home. After nearly two decades, the rapid U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has upended the lives of thousands of private security contractors from some of the world's poorest countries not the hired guns but the hired hands who serviced the American war effort. For years, they toiled in the shadows as cleaners, cooks, construction workers, servers and technicians on sprawling American bases.

In the rushed evacuation, scores of these foreign workers trying to get home to the Philippines and other countries that restricted international travel because of the pandemic have become stuck in limbo at hotels across Dubai.

As the U.S. brings home its remaining troops and abandons its bases, experts say the chaotic departure of the Pentagon's logistics army lays bare an uncomfortable truth about a privatized system long susceptible to mismanagement one largely funded by American taxpayers but outside the purview of American law.

"It's the same situation that affects foreign contractors



The Mövenpick Hotel & Apartments Bur Dubai is seen with the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, behind it in the distance in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, Aug. 6, 2021.

Associated Press

all over the world, people who have little understanding of where they're going and very uncertain relationships once they arrive determining their legal status and movements," said Anthony Cordesman, a national security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"The terms of contracts in war can really absolve the employer of major responsibility ... even the right of return can be uncertain."

While it's unclear just how many remain stuck abroad after the evacuation, an Associated Press journalist saw at least a dozen Filipino contractors for engineering and construction company Fluor stranded at the Mövenpick hotel in Bur Dubai,

an older neighborhood of the city-state along the Dubai Creek.

The hotel management declined to comment, saying it "has no authority to disclose presence and information of any hotel guests nor hotel corporate partners details due to privacy reasons."

The U.S. military's Central Command declined to comment on private security contractors, referring all questions to their companies. The U.S. military's contracting office and the Philippines Consulate in Dubai did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the stranded Filipino contractors.

As of early June, 2,491 foreign contract workers remained on American bases

across Afghanistan, down from 6,399 in April, according to the latest figures from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

With the U.S. set to formally end its military mission at the month's end, most of these workers have since made it home on flights arranged by their employers the private military behemoths that over years of war won Pentagon logistics contracts in Afghanistan worth billions of dollars. But other employees, brought first to Dubai on their way home after an abrupt departure on June 15, weren't so lucky. The Philippines, along with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, halted flights to the United Arab Emirates in

mid-May over fears of the fast-spreading delta variant of the coronavirus and repeatedly renewed the travel ban.

Thus began a seemingly interminable layover that some Filipino workers described to the AP as one of anxiety and unrelenting boredom. The contractors spoke on condition of anonymity, citing the precariousness of their situation.

Drawn to Afghanistan by the promise of steady employment and wages far higher than in the Philippines, several of the stranded Fluor contractors spent years working in construction, equipment transport, visa processing and other military logistics. Some worked at Bagram Air Base, the largest military compound in the country, and at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan. They had nothing to do with combat operations but described nonetheless facing rocket attacks and other risks of war on base.

Those who spoke to the AP said they knew of scores more contractors from the Philippines and other countries including Nepal stuck in Dubai, but couldn't provide more specific information. With their cash dwindling over the two-month layover, most said they couldn't afford to do anything but wait. They while away their time watching TV and video-calling with family in the Philippines from the hotel, where Fluor provides daily meals. □

London's Tower Bridge stuck open due to a technical fault

By DANICA KIRKA

LONDON (AP) — London's Tower Bridge was stuck with its roadway arms raised Monday afternoon, snarling traffic on both sides of the River Thames.

Images of the 127-year-old drawbridge, one of several spans that connect the northern and southern parts of the British capital, show the two halves of the roadway pointing skyward with vehicles backed up on either side. The bridge remained stuck at 6 p.m.,

(1700 GMT/1300 EDT) more than three hours after the problems began.

"Due to a technical issue, Tower Bridge is currently stuck in a raised position," the City of London Corp., which owns the bridge, said in a statement. "We are working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible." The bridge opens about 800 times a year to allow large ships to pass, with the times arranged at least 24 hours in advance.

Tower Bridge was repaired

in 2006 after the mechanism became stuck four times the previous year. Malfunctions have been less frequent since then, with the last incident reported on Aug. 22, 2020, when it was stuck for more than an hour.

In May of 1997, U.S. President Bill Clinton was separated from Prime Minister Tony Blair when the bridge opened before his motorcade could cross. In that case there was no technical fault. Just bad timing. □



A boat sails down the River Thames in London, Monday Aug. 9, 2021 in front of Tower Bridge that is stuck in the fully open position due to a technical fault.

Associated Press

Official: Protracted Afghan war Pakistan's worst nightmare

By KATHY GANNON

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A protracted war in neighboring Afghanistan is Pakistan's "nightmare scenario," the country's national security advisor said Monday. He also slammed relentless blaming of Islamabad for the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan.

The U.S. needs to take the lead to get the Afghan government and the Taliban back to the negotiation table, Moeed Yusuf told foreign journalists in the Pakistani capital.

He said Pakistan is pushing the Taliban to return to negotiations but its leverage is waning as the insurgent group gains more ground in Afghanistan.

Pakistan hasn't even been able to convince the Taliban to reopen the border crossing at Spin Boldak in southeastern Afghanistan, which the insurgent force captured last month, Yusuf said. In their sweep through Afghanistan, which began with the late April start of the final withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops, the Taliban have gained control of strategic and lucrative border crossings, including the Spin Boldak crossing with Pakistan.

Last weekend the Taliban closed the crossing in south-



Taliban fighters stand guard in Kunduz city, northern Afghanistan, Monday, Aug. 9, 2021. Taliban fighters stand guard in Kunduz city, northern Afghanistan, Monday, Aug. 9, 2021.

Associated Press

east Afghanistan after Islamabad demanded that Afghans crossing to the Pakistani side have a passport and a Pakistani visa, something that had not previously been required. The Taliban accused Pakistan of imposing the new rules to please Kabul and President Ashraf Ghani. They shuttered the border, insisting Pakistan reinstate an earlier lax policy under which the thousands who cross daily were rarely re-

quired to show even local identity cards. As a result, thousands of Afghans and Pakistanis are stuck at the border and hundreds of trucks loaded with perishable goods have been waiting to cross. As the Aug. 31 deadline for the final withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan approaches, Yusuf called for "a reinvigorated, re-emphasized, rejuvenated effort to try and get Afghan political actors

... in one room ... to get to a settlement of how to move forward."

"Anything but an inclusive political settlement means a protracted conflict, through which instability will likely spill over into Pakistan," he said. "So our nightmare scenario is a protracted conflict."

Yusuf said Pakistan, which already hosts about 2 million Afghan refugees, hasn't got the resources to absorb a fresh wave of

refugees. The government fears that will happen if fighting continues and the sides don't return to the negotiating table.

The Taliban's onslaught defies statements by their political leadership in the Middle Eastern country Qatar advocating for talks. The insurgent force has shown no sign of wanting to negotiate, instead pressing ahead on the battlefield, sweeping through five provincial capitals in less than a week.

Yusuf accused Afghanistan of scapegoating Pakistan, blaming it for the Taliban advances and demanded evidence of accusations by Kabul at a recent U.N. Security Council meeting that 10,000 fighters were crossing from Pakistan to Afghanistan.

Instead he attacked the performance of Afghanistan's National Defense and Security Forces in those areas where they abandoned districts, occasionally crossing into Tajikistan or Iran or Pakistan to escape the advancing Taliban.

"We are told that over a trillion dollars were put into Afghanistan and much of that into the ANSF to prepare the army and the security forces. ... What is going on with this well-equipped and trained force?" □

New Iran president calls Macron about stalled nuclear talks



President Ebrahim Raisi, right, takes his oath as president, as Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejehi listens in a ceremony at the parliament in Tehran, Iran, Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021.

Associated Press

By NASSER KARIMI

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — In his first phone call to a Western leader, the new president of Iran asked his French counterpart Monday to

help secure Iran's "rights" in now-stalled talks to revive Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Ebrahim Raisi, the hard-line cleric and protégé of

Iran's supreme leader who took office last week, told French President Emmanuel Macron that the U.S. and European Union must implement their commitments under the landmark 2015 deal, the official IRNA news agency reported. France, alongside the U.S., Germany, Britain, Russia and China, was part of the original 2015 nuclear agreement and has played a prominent role as intermediary.

"In any negotiation, the rights of the Iranian nation should be secured and guaranteed," he said, criticizing the U.S. for abandoning the accord and reimposing crushing sanctions under former President

Donald Trump.

Even as tensions rise in the region and Tehran gradually abandons its own commitments under the nuclear deal, Raisi's remarks signal the new administration's willingness to return to the table. The parties to the agreement have convened in Vienna over the last several months to resuscitate the accord, which reined in Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. The talks ended in June with no date set for their resumption.

Macron, for his part, called on Iran to "quickly resume negotiations in Vienna in order to get to a conclusion and put an end without delay to all the nuclear

activities it is carrying out in breach of the agreement," the French government statement said.

In the days before Raisi's inauguration, the region saw a series of escalations, including an explosive-laden drone attack on an Israeli-linked ship off the coast of Oman that killed two crew members. The West has blamed Iran for the assault, though Tehran has denied involvement.

Speaking to Macron, Raisi emphasized that Iran "is very serious about providing security and preserving deterrence in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman." The country routinely "confronts offenders of security," he added. □

Rwandan, Mozambican forces retake port from insurgents

By ANDREW MELDRUM and
TOM BOWKER

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A joint force of Mozambican and Rwandan troops has regained control of a strategic port from Islamic extremists who held the town in northern Mozambique for a year, the countries' defense ministries have announced.

The retaking of Mocimboa da Praia is a notable success for the 1,000-strong Rwandan force that deployed to Mozambique last month.

Rwanda's troops have rapidly helped Mozambique's armed forces achieve victories against the insurgents, who have created a humanitarian emergency in northern Cabo Delgado province and surrounding areas. Before the Rwandan forces arrived, Mozambique's military and police had not succeeded in stemming the insurgents' offensives.

More than 3,000 Mozambicans have been killed and 800,000 people displaced by the four-year insurgency. Nearly 1 million people need urgent food aid as



In this image made from video, Rwandan troops patrol a harbor using boats in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

a result of the conflict, according to the U.N. World Food Program.

Earlier this year the insurgents, loosely allied to the Islamic State group, forced the French energy firm Total to pull out of its \$20 billion liquified natural gas project near Palma, further north on the Indian Ocean coastline. Mozambican media report that the financing

for the Rwandan troops' mission in Mozambique is coming from France.

The joint operations between Mozambican and Rwandan forces have succeeded in forcing the insurgents to retreat "from the zones where they have exerted relative influence," Mozambican colonel Omar Saranga told a press conference on Sunday.

The joint force has taken control of public and private buildings in Mocimboa da Praia including local government offices, the port, the airport, the hospital, markets and restaurants, Saranga said. The port is key to transporting supplies to other parts of Cabo Delgado province, including the liquified natural gas project.

After employing a private military company, Dyck Advisory Group, last year, Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi is now accepting assistance from other African governments. In addition to the Rwandans, a regional force from the Southern African Development Community officially starts operations on Monday.

That military mission will be based in Pemba, the provincial capital. On Monday, Nyusi and Botswanan President Mokgweetsi Masisi are to inspect troops from South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Lesotho and Tanzania. Zimbabwe has also sent troops but only to help train Mozambique's armed forces, not to take part in combat operations, according to the Zimbabwean government. Shortly before the Rwandans' deployment was announced, and after a meeting between Nyusi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, a Rwandan dissident living as a refugee in Mozambique was abducted, apparently by police. □

Mexican cartel threatens news anchor, demands equal coverage

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Masked men claiming to represent Mexico's most powerful drug cartel have taken the unusual step of circulating a video threatening to kill a national television news anchor for what they viewed as unfair coverage.

The video circulated Monday showed masked and heavily armed men surrounding a man seated at a small desk who delivered a message he said was from Ruben Oseguera Cervantes, aka "El Mencho," leader of the Jalisco New Generation cartel. It was unclear if the person reading the message was Oseguera himself. The message complained that Milenio Television, a national cable news channel associated with a major newspaper chain, was favoring so-called self-defense groups that are battling the Jalisco cartel in Michoacan state.

He singled out Mileno anchor Azucena Uresti, threatening to kill her and make her eat her words.

The man alleged that the vigilante groups were actually drug traffickers, the only organizations that could afford the armament those forces had at their disposal. □

The message mentioned Hipolito Mora, who organized a self-defense force in Michoacan nearly a decade earlier, but who more recently has distanced himself from such groups, as well as Los Viagras, a criminal group operating in the state.

The Jalisco cartel representative said in the message that he did not want to inhibit freedom of expression, but just wanted the coverage to be even.

Milenio Television and Uresti did not immediately comment on the threat.

Presidential spokesman Jesús Ramírez Cuevas said via Twitter that the Mexican government "will take the necessary measures to protect threatened journalists and news outlets."

Threats against journalists are not empty talk in Mexico. The Committee to Protect Journalists considers Mexico the deadliest country in the Western Hemisphere for journalists.

The Jalisco cartel has also shown itself to have nearly unlimited reach within Mexico. In June 2020, cartel gunmen carried out a brazen attack in Mexico City that left the police chief seriously wounded and killed three others. □

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Tuscany Residences now offer a special pre-construction discount, whereby your advantage increases to 9.7%. Pre-construction prices starting at US\$ 450,775 Turn-Key!

Dutch design

This luxury residential resort with various types of homes has many amenities such as swimming pools, restaurant, bar, offices, meeting rooms, gym, wellness and more. The combination of the beautiful Dutch modern international architecture and the Aruban palm trees creates a luxurious Aruban feeling and relaxed atmosphere in this resort. Tuscany Residence Aruba is the perfect choice for couples and families. Bas de Groot, Managing Director of Tuscany Residence Aruba adds, "We differ from traditional building, our design distinguishes itself." At 8 minutes' walk from Palm Beach, designed in a European style with high-quality materials, on property land and with buying possibilities from condos to townhouses to villas, Tuscany Residence is a dream comes true.



We take care of it all

De Groot adds, "Our project is in continuous construction which builds confidence. He continues saying that maintenance, property management, rental program and safety are taken care of. "You can log in from abroad and manage your property for rental or view your administration." The great thing about Tuscany is that it offers everything equal to a resort but you do not need to wait for an elevator to bring you up, worry about parking space or noisy neighbors. "We have got space and different size offerings making this more a community feel rather than a packed condo building." He also emphasizes that the location is one of the best on Aruba as it is quiet and close to Palm Beach.

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For an impression of Daimari Water Villas have a look at the website: <https://www.tuscanyresidencearuba.com/en/news>. For more information please contact Bas de Groot by phone +297-7332424 or email bas@tuscanyresidencearuba.com.

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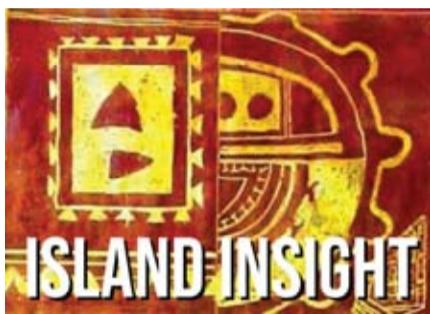
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Article by Etnia Nativa

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The benefits of gardening

NOORD — We are living in a society in which people have less and less time while gardens can be seen as stressor. However, on the other hand a garden will provide you with a more relaxed life style and a connection with nature that will lead you to enjoy certain benefits.

Studies have shown that gardening is good therapy to feel good and that half an hour dedicated to gardening reduces stress. A reduction in stress that translates into improving the ability to remember and even learning. By practicing gardening we are able to distance ourselves from our daily problems, which is an ideal point to achieve the long-sought and awaited inner peace. When you take care of the garden you will notice that your plants are growing more and more beautiful every day, you'll feel comforted with the work that causes your immune system to be strengthened. Gardening is directly related to our system since; in general, it is practiced in an outdoor space, where we receive sun-



light, which translates into vitamin D, responsible for helping the body absorb calcium, a mineral that strengthens the bones and the immune system. When you take care of your garden for 45 minutes in addition to burning the same amount of calories as in 30 minutes of aerobic exercises, which will make you feel much more optimistic because gardening, improves your

enthusiasm for life. In any case, gardening involves movement which is a very healthy activity!. Gardening dirt's and stains your hands with soil, transplanting, watering, pruning, cultivating ... is a perfect therapy to improve your well-being, and is that when you practice gardening your body generates serotonin and dopamine, two chemicals that stimulate the immune system

and keep us happy. It seems that one of the most rudimentary tasks such as gardening stimulates us since we feel and touch the earth (which is like grounding, reconnecting with it). We see beautiful things, we perceive the smells and details of the earths and flowers. Go out on the terrace or garden and take care of your plants!. Reducing stress level by doing a comforting and satisfying job, like taking care of your trees, shrubs and flowers or pick your crops and fruits, you will fall asleep easy and better. Caring for plants creates a relationship with the floral world that values all the fruits and vegetables provide us in a different way. In addition, if the practice of gardening is related to one's own the garden, more fruits and vegetables from could be cultivated and consumed fresh. Through the care of plants we learn great lessons such as caring for the environment, natural flora, the importance of resources and the preservation of, how they are grown and where certain foods come from, the real need to eat fresh and following a healthy diet.□



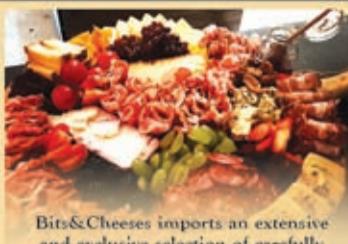
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The number of requests for vaccines has doubled since the arrival of 12.000 vaccines

ORANJESTAD — In the last week, the number of COVID-19 cases increased considerably in Aruba.

From these numbers, we can already conclude the following:

1. The vast majority of persons getting COVID-19 are not vaccinated;
2. The group of vaccinated persons that get COVID-19 does not get very sick;
3. Very few vaccinated persons that get COVID-19 get hospitalized
4. Currently, there are no vaccinated persons with COVID-19 in the ICU.



that more vaccines than the requests to vaccinate. The Prime Minister urges parents to take their children to take the vaccine before the start of the new school year so that their studies won't suffer if they get COVID-19 and must go into quarantine or isolation. The vaccine will give more protection to young persons and adults against the severe effects of this virus. "The Centro Libertador Betico Croes (Sporthall) vaccination center will remain open for persons wanting to take the vaccine. Let us make use of this opportunity for Aruba to recover and prosper", the Prime Minister expressed.

Loyal visitors honored as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were Mrs. Beverly Marshall & Mrs. Shirley Duckett from Pennsylvania, USA! The Emerald Ambassador certificate is the highest certificate that we present, and is given to visitors who have been visiting Aruba 35 years or more consecutively. It is incredibly beautiful to see that Aruba has so many loyal visitors, and we

hope to see them for many more years to come.

These wonderful people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to them. Richardson together with the representatives of the Aruba Beach Club presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home.



TikTok executive talks shopping and the famous feta pasta

By JOSEPH PISANI

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Feta cheese was scarce in some stores earlier this year. The culprit? TikTok, where videos that showed an easy-to-make baked feta pasta recipe went viral.

TikTok, launched in the U.S. in 2018, has become a force in the shopping world, influencing people to buy things they've seen on the app, from cheese to leggings.

Now TikTok wants to capitalize on that power. It hired Sandie Hawkins last year, whose job as general manager is to make money for the company in North America. She works with brands directly, getting them to buy ads on the app, create TikTok videos and explain how they can use it to boost sales.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Hawkins talks about the difference between an influencer and a creator and why she ended up buying feta cheese, too.

The questions and answers has been edited for length and clarity.

Q: How do you create a TikTok video that goes viral?

A: That's the beautiful part about the platform you don't know. Any piece of content on the platform can take off.

The magic of TikTok happens on the front page, the "For You" page. It starts to learn the type of content that you like and bring that type of content to you. It's not based off of the people that you follow.

Q: What is it about TikTok videos that makes people want to buy what they see?



This photo provided by TikTok shows Sandie Hawkins. TikTok, launched in the U.S. in 2018, has become a force in the shopping world, influencing people to buy things they've seen on the app, from cheese to leggings.

Associated Press

A: I think it's the evolution of product placement. You have real people that are demonstrating product or wearing product and using it in a way that you would use it or wear it. Maybe if you're a dancer and you see leggings that are super comfortable and somebody who's dancing and you see that they're not sliding down or they're not riding up.

They're not trying to pretend that

the products are doing something that they don't.

Q: You call people who make TikTok videos creators instead of influencers. Why?

A: We choose to call them creators because anybody can do it and anybody can take off on the platform. There was a fashion creator who is big on TikTok and she started wearing her Gap hoodie in her videos and they started taking off.

And she's not somebody that Gap was following or sending clothing to, which would be more of that influencer side. She was somebody who wore a Gap hoodie one day as an outfit and then Gap hoodies started taking off because people liked what she was wearing.

Q: People know that influencers on other social media apps are paid and can't be trusted. How do you stop that from happening on TikTok?

A: There is an authenticity to the platform. People don't want to be fake. Based off of what I've seen, folks would just not talk about it rather than start endorsing things that they don't believe in because their followers would stop following them. They would lose their credibility, which is so important.

Q: Have you bought anything you've seen on TikTok?

A: I have made the feta pasta. I'm not a very good cook, but I do love watching recipes on TikTok. And when I saw the feta pasta recipe, I thought to myself, that is something that I could make. And so I went out for the feta cheese, which started selling out in stores. It took me a few times to actually be able to find it.

Q: Users can't buy anything directly on TikTok right now. Is that going to change?

A: We're always looking for ways to evolve our features and to make shopping on the platform better. It's definitely something that we're looking forward to continue to push on, consolidating that path to purchase. □

U.S. job openings hit a record 10.1 million in June

By PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers posted a record 10.1 million job openings in June, another sign that the job market and economy are bouncing back briskly from last year's coronavirus shutdowns.

Job openings rose from 9.5 million in May, the Labor Department reported Monday. Employers hired 6.7 million workers in June, up from 6 million in May. The gap between openings and hiring suggests that firms are scrambling to find workers.

Lingering health fears, difficulty getting childcare at a time when many schools are closed and expanded

federal jobless aid may have kept some unemployed Americans from seeking work.

Still, hiring (up nearly 12%) grew faster than job openings (up 6%), narrowing the mismatch. In a research report, Contingent Macro Advisors suggested that "this report might offer the first sign that headwinds like generous unemployment benefits and childcare issues for parents might finally be abating, allowing people to get back to work."

A record low 1.3 million people were laid off or fired in June.

The monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover survey, or JOLTS, showed that

nearly 3.9 million workers quit their jobs in June, a sign of confidence in their prospects of getting a better one. The June quits number was just shy of the record 4 million, set in April.

The U.S. economy has rebounded with unexpected strength as the rollout of vaccines allows businesses to reopen or expand hours and encourages cooped-up Americans to get out again and visit restaurants, bars and shops. Still, the fast-spreading delta variant has cast a shadow over the outlook. Daily cases are averaging more than 100,000, up from fewer than 12,000 in late June but down around 250,000 in early January.



A Now Hiring sign at a business in Richmond, Va., Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Associated Press

On Friday, the Labor Department reported that 943,000 jobs last month and the unemployment rate fell to 5.4% from 5.9% in June. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 37 Diversions1 Language 40 Ridiculous
of Iran 41 Tenant's6 Thrifty
person 42 Watches11 Space
visitor 43 Useful
skill12 Kevin of
"The Big
Chill"13 Officials
with stop-
watches

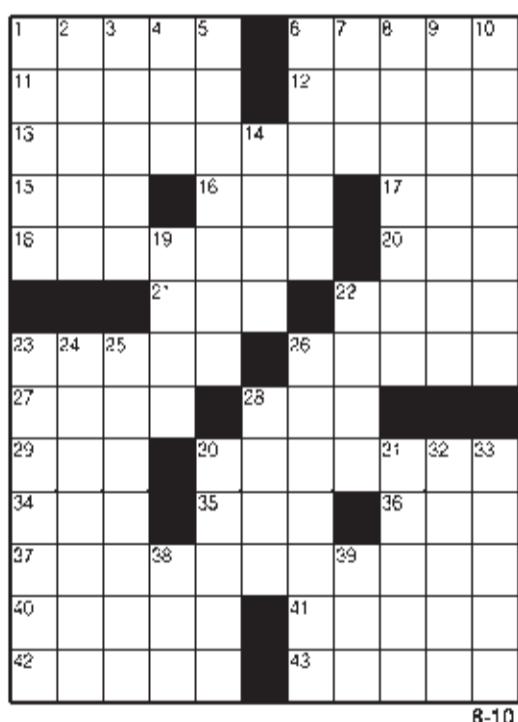
15 Top card

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mike28 Uno
doubled29 Before, in
poems30 Bond's
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brew35 Boxing
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visitor	10 Bristles at	28 Surrealist
3 Singer	14 Ages and	Salvador
LeAnn	ages	30 Creates
4 View	19 Hook's	31 Notions
5 Tangled	helper	32 Like Thor
6 Distorts	22 Ship staff	and Odin
7 The	23 Worry	33 Miniature
Matter-	24 Pilot's	map
horn,	employer	38 Complete
for	25 Morgan of	39 French
one	movies	article

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-10**CRYPTOQUOTE**

K O I E I U E I K J L B U R K N F Z
M I P V I R K R J I G U F Z N Y I L V E
G O N B S E I F : L F I N R E L L K R .
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— O L S S N E Z G U E K I E

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: YOUR PAST DOES NOT DEFINE WHO YOU ARE, IT'S ONLY MUSCLE THAT YOU ARE BUILDING FOR YOUR FUTURE.
MAYRA RUBIO

Some praise, some doubts as Facebook rolls out a prayer tool

By HOLLY MEYER and DAVID CRARY
Associated Press

Facebook already asks for your thoughts. Now it wants your prayers.

The social media giant has rolled out a new prayer request feature, a tool embraced by some religious leaders as a cutting-edge way to engage the faithful online. Others are eyeing it warily as they weigh its usefulness against the privacy and security concerns they have with Facebook.

In Facebook Groups employing the feature, members can use it to rally prayer power for upcoming job interviews, illnesses and other personal challenges big and small. After they create a post, other users can tap an "I prayed" button, respond with a "like" or other reaction, leave a comment or send a direct message.

Facebook began testing it in the U.S. in December as part of an ongoing effort to support faith communities, according to a statement attributed to a company spokesperson.

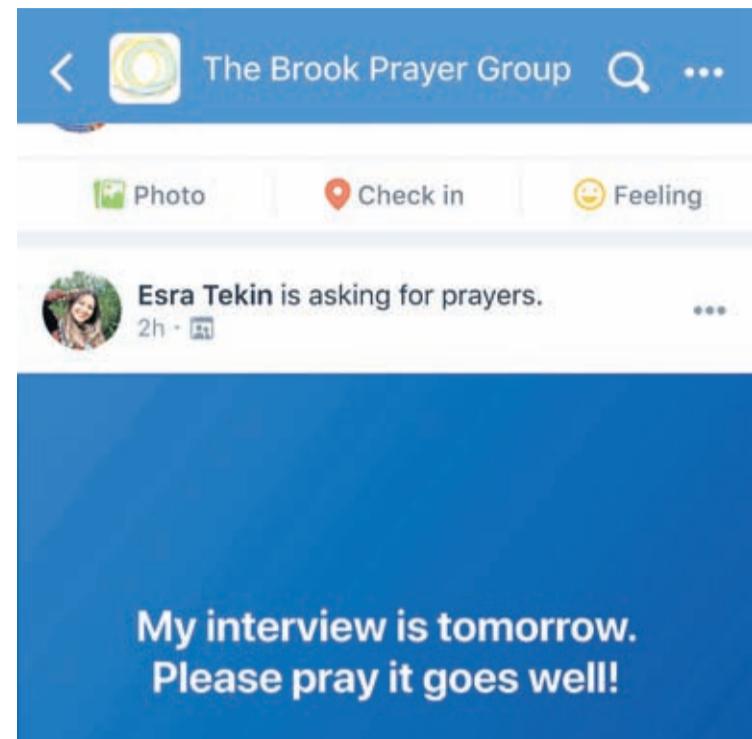
"During the COVID-19 pandemic we've seen many faith and spirituality communities using our services to connect, so we're starting to explore new tools to support them," it said.

The Rev. Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas, a Southern Baptist megachurch, was among the pastors enthusiastically welcoming of the prayer feature.

"Facebook and other social media platforms continue to be tremendous tools to spread the Gospel of Christ and connect believers with one another especially during this pandemic," he said. "While any tool can be misused, I support any effort like this that encourages people to turn to the one true God in our time of need."

Adeel Zeb, a Muslim chaplain at The Claremont Colleges in California, also was upbeat.

"As long as these compa-



This image provided by Facebook in August 2021 shows a simulation of the social media company's prayer request feature.

Associated Press

nies initiate proper precautions and protocols to ensure the safety of religiously marginalized communities, people of faith should jump on board supporting this vital initiative," he said.

Under its data policy, Facebook uses the information it gathers in a variety of ways, including to personalize advertisements. But the company says advertisers are not able to use a person's prayer posts to target ads.

The Rev. Bob Stec, pastor of St. Ambrose Catholic Parish in Brunswick, Ohio, said via email that on one hand, he sees the new feature as a positive affirmation of people's need for an "authentic community" of prayer, support and worship.

But "even while this is a 'good thing,' it is not necessary the deeply authentic community that we need," he said. "We need to join our voices and hands in prayer. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with each other and walk through great moments and challenges together." Stec also worried about privacy concerns surrounding the sharing of deeply personal traumas.

"Is it wise to post everything about everyone for the

whole world to see?" he said. "On a good day we would all be reflective and make wise choices. When we are under stress or distress or in a difficult moment, it's almost too easy to reach out on Facebook to everyone."

However, Jacki King, the minister to women at Second Baptist Conway, a Southern Baptist congregation in Conway, Arkansas, sees a potential benefit for people who are isolated amid the pandemic and struggling with mental health, finances and other issues.

"They're much more likely to get on and make a comment than they are to walk into a church right now," King said. "It opens a line of communication."

Bishop Paul Egensteiner of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Metropolitan New York Synod said he has been dismayed by some aspects of Facebook but welcomes the feature, which bears similarities to a digital prayer request already used by the synod's churches.

"I hope this is a genuine effort from Facebook to help religious organizations advance their mission," Egensteiner said. □

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'Reservation Dogs' smashes stereotypes of Indigenous people

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Two Indigenous filmmakers are smashing the caricatures and stereotypes of Native Americans, who since the earliest days of film and TV have often played supporting roles or been portrayed as bloodthirsty killers standing in the way of white, westward expansion.

Sterlin Harjo, a Seminole and Muscogee filmmaker from Oklahoma, teamed up with Taika Waititi, a Maori director from New Zealand, on "Reservation Dogs," a new series debuting Monday on FX on Hulu that features four rough-and-tumble teenagers who cuss, fight and steal their way toward adulthood in a rural Oklahoma town. Filmed entirely on the Muscogee Nation reservation in eastern Oklahoma, the network says the half-hour comedy is the first show on cable TV in which all the writers, directors and regular characters on the series are Indigenous.

"To be able to tell a real story about real people through comedy, it's about time," Harjo, who directed "Mekko" and "Barking Water," said during a premiere of the series this week in Tulsa. "There's been 130-something years of cinema and we're finally showing ourselves as human beings, which shouldn't be radical, but it is pretty radical today."

Devery Jacobs, a Mohawk actor from Quebec, Canada, who plays one of the show's lead characters, said working on a set with so many Indigenous actors



Cast members of the new FX on Hulu series "Reservation Dogs" pose for a photo with the co-creator of the series, Oklahoma filmmaker Sterlin Harjo, on Monday, Aug. 2, 2021, outside the Circle Cinema in Tulsa, Okla. Pictured, from left, are D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Pauline Alexis, Harjo and Devery Jacobs. Photo by Sean Murphy.

Associated Press

and crew was a breath of fresh air.

"On a lot of projects, I was the only Indigenous person for miles," Jacobs said. "Stepping on the set of 'Reservation Dogs' and seeing my community around me, a community of fellow Indigenous folks from different backgrounds, it was truly being welcomed home."

"I'd never experienced it before, and it just meant so much to me, and I know it's going to mean so much to audiences across Turtle Island and beyond," she said, using a term many Indigenous people, mainly in the northeastern part of North America, use to refer to the continent.

Waititi and Harjo, long-

time friends collaborating for the first time, said the series arose out of discussions about the kind of show they'd like to see, and before they knew it had "come up with this idea about these kids who had turned into vigilantes and wanted to clean up their community," recalled Waititi, the Oscar-winning writer and director of "Jojo Rabbit," whose credits also include "Thor: Ragnarok" and the TV series "What We Do in the Shadows."

"We weren't entirely sure where it would be and then it just struck us that setting it here would be perfect."

Filmed mostly in the small eastern Oklahoma town of Okmulgee, where the Muscogee Nation is head-

quartered, the show's restless young characters are familiar beyond Indigenous communities and small towns, Waititi and Harjo said.

"The idea of just wandering around the suburb or a small community with nothing to do, wondering what the hell's out there for me and what am I going to do with my life," Waititi said. "That's the heart of what drives these kids ... a lot of teenagers all over the world, they feel like that."

Although the characters aren't identified as members of a specific Native American tribe, the Muscogee Nation was heavily involved in helping to scout locations, and a public premiere at its River Spirit

Resort and Casino in Tulsa drew close to 2,000 people. "The real value in this show and the representation is the authenticity of it," said Jason Salsman, a Muscogee Nation spokesman. "There have been so many years and instances of invisibility, mischaracterization and misappropriation of Native culture in film and movies."

"This is a welcome change," he said.

Like many of the 39 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma, the Muscogee Nation has been diversifying its economy with the help of an infusion of cash from tribal gambling approved by voters in 2004. The U.S. Supreme Court also upheld the boundaries of the Nation's reservation 3 million acres (12,100 square kilometers), including most of the city of Tulsa in a landmark decision last year on tribal sovereignty.

The show's production in Oklahoma comes at a time when the film and television industry is booming in the state.

The Oklahoma Film and Music Office estimates the 33 film and television productions, including "Reservation Dogs," that qualified for a state rebate on qualifying expenditures in the last year had a direct fiscal impact of more than \$161 million. Other films shot in Oklahoma include Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon," "Stillwater" starring Matt Damon and this year's Academy Award-winning film "Minari." □

Dave Chappelle, Jon Stewart to perform at 9/11 benefit show



Comedian Dave Chappelle arrives at Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to receive the 22nd Annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in Washington on Oct. 27, 2019, left, actor-comedian Pete Davidson attends the premiere of "Big Time Adolescence" on March 5, 2020, in New York, center, and comedian Jon Stewart performs at the 9th Annual Stand Up For Heroes event in New York on Nov. 10, 2015.

Associated Press

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Dave Chappelle, Jon Stewart, Jimmy Fallon and Amy Schumer are part of a star-studded group of comedians that will perform for one night only at Madison Square Garden to mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

All proceeds from "NYC Still Rising After 20 Years: A Comedy Celebration" will

benefit 9/11 charities.

Proof of vaccination is required.

"We wanted to put on a fun celebration to honor this great city's resilience. It's nice to be able to do this with friends and people we love," Stewart said in a statement.

The show is his brainchild with Pete Davidson, who will also perform.

A ticket pre-sale for the

Sept. 12 show begins at noon Wednesday on Live Nation, Ticketmaster.com and MSG and runs until 10 p.m. Thursday, with general tickets on sale starting at noon Friday at Ticketmaster.com. Bill Burr, Colin Jost, Colin Quinn, Dave Attell, Jay Pharoah, John Mulaney, Michael Che, Ronny Chieng, Tom Segura and Wanda Sykes are also in the line up. □

Yankees, Braves and Phillies on the rise as rivals struggle

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Baseball Writer

Expectations were so high for the New York Yankees — and their roster is so strong on paper — that seemingly every emotional win is viewed as a potential turning point in their frustrating season.

They won five games in a row this past week, although once again, it wasn't all good news.

The Yankees have made some progress in the post-season race. They're still 6 1/2 games out of first place in the AL East, but they've won 10 of 13 while Boston has dropped 10 of 13. That leaves New York just 2 1/2 games behind the Red Sox and Athletics for the American League's two wild cards.

The Yankees could also have Gio Urshela back soon, but that doesn't mean they'll be at full strength. Shortstop Gleyber Torres was set to get an MRI after hurting his thumb on a stolen base in Sunday's loss to Seattle. And COVID-19 continues to be a thorn in the Yankees' side. Anthony Rizzo tested positive after Saturday's game, and Gerrit Cole, Jordan Montgomery and Gary Sánchez



New York Yankees first baseman Anthony Rizzo and designated hitter Aaron Judge (99) celebrate after the Yankees defeated the Seattle Mariners in a baseball game on Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021, in New York.

have all been sidelined recently.

If there's a National League version of the Yankees, it may be Atlanta, a team with a shot at its fourth straight division title despite an underwhelming season so far.

The Braves, who lost Ronald Acuña Jr. to a season-ending knee injury, are just two

games out of first place after winning five of their last six. Atlanta is also the only NL East team with a positive run differential.

The team at the top of the NL East changed recently. Philadelphia has won eight in a row, including a three-game sweep of the Mets, who have dropped from first place all the way to

third. Up next for the Phillies is a three-game home series against the defending champion Dodgers.

IMPLOSION

The Baltimore Orioles began the week with a 7-1 win over the Yankees on Monday night. Since then, Baltimore's pitching has been getting drubbed. The Orioles allowed at least 10

runs in four consecutive games — then allowed nine Sunday.

In its past five games, Baltimore has allowed 22 runs in the eighth inning alone. The Orioles only scored 19 runs total in those games. Baltimore has had some bright spots this year — particularly outfielder Cedric Mullins — but the Orioles are dead last in the majors with a 5.62 ERA. They host Detroit starting Tuesday night — with Tigers slugger Miguel Cabrera needing only two homers to reach 500.

TRIVIA TIME

Zack Wheeler of the Phillies earned his second shutout of the season when he blanked the Mets 3-0 on Sunday. Who are the only two other pitchers with multiple shutouts this season?

LINE OF THE WEEK

That performance by Wheeler — in which he allowed two hits and struck out 11 — was special for a number of reasons. The Phillies retired the jersey of the late Roy Halladay on Sunday, and Wheeler retired 22 consecutive batters during one stretch — the most by a Phillies pitcher since Halladay's perfect game in 2010. □

2012 champ Andy Murray in US Open draw; Wawrinka withdraws

By HOWARD FENDRICH

Andy Murray moved into the field for the U.S. Open on Monday when another past champion at Flushing Meadows, Stan Wawrinka, pulled out because he still is recovering from foot surgery.

Murray is a former No. 1 and three-time Grand Slam title winner, including in New York in 2012. His ranking slid out of the top 100 after he had two hip operations in recent years.

The 34-year-old from Scotland returned to the tour in June after a three-month absence because of a groin problem and reached the third round at Wimbledon, then withdrew from the singles competition at the Tokyo Olympics on July 25, citing a strained right quadriceps. He was

the two-time reigning men's singles gold medalist.

Murray did play doubles for Britain at the Summer Games in Japan, reaching the quarterfinals with Joe Salisbury.

The U.S. Tennis Association also announced Monday that Patricia Maria Tig of Romania will not be playing in the year's last Grand Slam tournament. Tig has a continuing back injury and was replaced in the field by Claire Liu of the U.S.

Wawrinka won the title in Flushing Meadows in 2016 for the last of his three major singles championships.

The 36-year-old Wawrinka is 3-3 in 2021 and has not competed on tour since losing his opening match to Lloyd Harris at the Qatar Open in March.

Wawrinka had surgery on his left foot shortly after that, then needed another procedure on the same foot in June. He is ranked 31st and was in line to be seeded if he had been able to play in the U.S. Open, where main-draw action starts Aug. 30. Murray, who is 105th in the ATP rankings, reached the second round at Flushing Meadows in each of his past two appearances, in 2018 and last year.

After his third-round loss to eventual semifinalist Denis Shapovalov at the All England Club last month, Murray wondered allowed about what the future might hold for him.

"There is a part of me that feels a bit like I have put in so much work the last three months and, ultimately, didn't play how I would



Andy Murray, of Britain, reacts after winning the first set during his doubles match in the quarterfinals of the tennis competition at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Wednesday, July 28, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan.

Associated Press

want and expect. And it's like: Is it worth it?" Murray said then. "Is all of that training and everything that you're doing in the gym unless you're

able to, like, practice and improve your game and get matches and continue (to) get a run of tournaments is it worth all of the work that you're doing?" □

Fewer medals, more heart for US at a most unusual Olympics

By EDDIE PELLS
AP National Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Kara Winger is the American record-holder in the javelin throw who just wrapped up her fourth Olympics. She has never finished higher than sixth place.

When she got the call over the weekend telling her she would be carrying the flag Sunday for the United States at the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Games, her first reaction was "shock."

"I expected tweets with people saying 'What has she done?'" Winger said.

Turns out, an awful lot over a career that has spanned two decades. That the American athletes chose her as flagbearer is a fitting lens through which to view the U.S. accomplishments at these Games.

The Americans won 113 medals, which, for the fifth straight Summer Games, was double-digits more than the nearest competition. It was, however, eight fewer than what they won five years ago in a Rio de Janeiro Olympics with fewer events.

When the athletes voted for Winger to represent them, they tapped into the core message resonating inside a fractured, fractious U.S. Olympic family over the last few years: The medals shouldn't matter more than the athletes who win them. Or sometimes not matter at all.

"We spent a ton of energy on creating an environ-



Players from the United States pose after winning the gold medal in women's volleyball at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan.

Associated Press

ment where people could be heard, and feel safe to be heard," said Sarah Hirshland, who came on as the CEO of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee in 2018.

She was tasked with repairing the damage from sexual-abuse cases that led athletes to wonder if they were valued for more than simply what they won.

If Winger as flagbearer is one sign that the USOPC has made some headway, then Simone Biles gets credit for making sure the message stayed front-and-center despite the hectic, pandemic-tainted run-up to an Olympics.

The willingness of the high-

est-profile athlete at the Games to step away because it didn't feel right, and to place her personal welfare over victory for herself and country, was startling at first.

Much more than costing medals, what Biles did was re-center the focus. As the Olympics moved into their second week, all but the most cynical observers started celebrating athletes for winning bronze — or nothing — even if they were picked to win gold. "These are not the USOPC's medals, these are the athletes' medals," Hirshland explained as the Biles decision was still reverberating.

That was part of what Hirsh-

land pitched as a new outlook for the USOPC.

Leading up to the Games, the USOPC introduced new mental-health offerings and created a new athlete-service division — first as a nod to the fallout from the sex-abuse cases, then as a resource to help athletes cope with a year-long delay and the COVID pandemic.

Their offices stayed busy over the 17 days in Tokyo. In the end, COVID-19 knocked out only four of the 600-plus athletes officially named to the team, a remarkable logistical challenge in a pandemic that came with its share of stumbles and critiques.

Some athletes who worked all their lives to get to this point were bitter that they couldn't share the trip with friends, family or fans.

That was largely a decision by local organizers that left the USOPC with limited options.

Still, Hirshland and the rest of the federation leaders are bound to hear their fair share of critiques — if not about Tokyo, then about what lies ahead.

The Beijing Games start a scant 180 days from Sunday's closing act in Tokyo. Much as the USOPC was forced into playing a lead role in changing the outlook on the IOC's rule banning demonstrations, it will be pressed by some to boycott those Games as a sign of protest of China's much-criticized human-rights record. The federation almost certainly won't go down that road, but the questions will persist.

So will doubts about its effectiveness in putting athletes first.

A snapshot: One program designed to funnel more money into athletes' pockets through sponsorship deals has been lauded by some, but criticized by others in the tightly knit world of agents who deal with Olympic clients.

And the USOPC is still involved in a number of lawsuits stemming from abuse cases — so expect more negative headlines about the organization for months and years to come. □



Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, right, holds the Olympic flag next to International Olympic Committee's President Thomas Bach, center, and Tokyo Gov.

Associated Press

Olympic flag arrives in Paris ahead of 2024 Games

PARIS (AP) — Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo brandished the Olympic flag on Monday in Paris upon her return from Tokyo, as the French capital will organize the Games in 2024.

After leaving the plane at Charles de Gaulle airport, surrounded by many of France's Olympic medalists, Hidalgo spoke of her "great emotion." She formally received the flag Sunday during the

Tokyo closing ceremony from International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach.

The flag "is the symbol that now, really, the Paris Games are coming and it will go very fast," Hidalgo told reporters, saying they will be "very positive for our country."

She said the Tokyo Games were "organized in very difficult conditions" because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

French organizers will stay in touch with Japanese counterparts to prepare for the Paris Games, including on security issues, Hidalgo added.

The Olympic flag will be raised at Paris City Hall later Monday. A celebration event will then take place at the Trocadero square, near the Eiffel Tower, so that the public can welcome French medalists home. □